A Note on "the Possibility of the Ribhus from the Bhrugu Clan"

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In the present note, based on the information available in some verses of **Rigved**, an attempt has been made to link the **Bhrugus** with the **Ribhus.**

I. Role of the Bhrugu clan in shaping the Yajna Ritual [1, 2]:

Yajna is the brain-child of the **pre-Rigvedic Rishis** and as per the information available in **Rigved**, it was fashioned **after the creation of Indra** (refer to verses **Rv-8.89,5** and **6**) [**1**]. In other words, it entered the **Earliest Vedic Philosophy** after the arrival of several old Deities like **Seven Adityas**, **Rudra**, **Brahmanaspati**, **Agni**, **Usha, Indra, Vishnu** etc.

Rigvedic Composers have identified two distinct forms of **Land based Agni.**

1. Household Agni – also known as ***Grihapati*** or Master of the house as in those days, in every house, food was cooked by burning the firewood. Additionally, **Agni** was regularly lit in night to obtain heat and light and used as a weapon to keep away the wild animals

2. Agni of Yajna- It is different from the normal household **Agni** and has its origin in the wildfires that occur naturally in the dense forests. The **Mandala-3** Poet in the verse **Rv-3.9,5** has made it clear that **Matarisvan** (means **wind**) brought **Agni of Yajna** to them [**1**].

Rv-3.9,5: Him wandering at his own free will, **Agni** here hidden from our view,
Him **Matarisvan** brought to us from far away produced by friction, from the Gods.

"Agni of Yajna" is a gift given to "Bhrugu by Matarisvan"

Rv-1.60,1: *vahniṃ yaśasaṃ vidathasya ketuṃ suprāvyaṃ dūtaṃ sadyoartham* |
dvijanmānaṃ *rayimiva praśastaṃ rātiṃ bharad* ***bhṛghavemātariśvā*** ||

As twere some goodly treasure **Matarisvan** brought, as a gift, the glorious Priest to ***Bhrgu***,
Banner of sacrifice, the good Protector, **child of two births**, the swiftly moving envoy.

Interpretation: The Poet has described **Agni** as ***Dvi-janma***; which implies that God **Agni** experiences **two births on land** means, one birth in the house of man by way of rubbing a wooden stick over another and is popularly known as **Grihapati** and probably another birth occurs in the **forests** as the **wildfire**. The verse also explains that **Agni** (of **Yajna**) is a gift

given by **Matarisvan** (**wind**) to an ancient **Bhrugu**. In other words, it is the ancient **Rishi Bhrugu** who got an idea of replicating wildfire into **Yajna ritual.**

Verse **Rv-1.83,4** informs us that Rishi **Angirasa** decided to go for **first sacrifice**.

Rv-1.83,4: ***ādaṅghirāḥ prathamaṃ*** *dadhire vaya iddhāghnayaḥ śamyā yesukṛtyayā* |

sarvaṃ paṇeḥ samavindanta bhojanamaśvāvantaṃ ghomantamā paśuṃ naraḥ ||

 # First the Angirases *won themselves vital power*, whose fires were kindled through good deeds and sacrifice. The men together found the Pani's hoarded wealth, the cattle, and the wealth in horses and in kine.

As per the verse **Rv-2.34,12 Dasagvas** (from **Angirasa** Clan) performed **first Yajna.**

RV-2.34,12: *te* ***daśaghvāḥ prathamā yajñamūhire*** *te no hinvantūṣaso vyuṣṭiṣu* |

uṣā na rāmīraruṇairaporṇute maho jyotiṣāśucatā ghoarṇasā ||

In addition to above mentioned references about **Angirasa clan**, same Poet through the verse **Rv-1.83,5** has also conveyed us that Rishi **Atharvan** belonging to **Bhrugu clan** was also present at the time of conduction of **First Yajna of Vedic World**.

Rv-1.83,5: ***yajñairatharvā prathamaḥ pathastate*** *tataḥ sūryo vratapāvena ājani* |

ā ghā ājaduśanā kāvyaḥ sacā yamasya jātamamṛtaṃ yajāmahe ||

**Atharvan first by sacrifices laid the paths then**, guardian of the Law, sprang up the loving Sun. Usana Kavya straightway hither drove the kine. Let us with offerings honour Yama's deathless birth.

The Poet of the verse **Rv-1.80,16** has intimated us that along with **Atharvan**, his son **Dadhyach** performed **Yajna**/sacrificial rite by praising God **Indra** with the specially composed song/prayer. The Composer(s) of the verses **Rv-1.116,12; Rv-1.117,22** has told us that **Dadhyach** is the son of **Atharvan [1]**.

Rv-1.80,16: ***yamatharva manuṣ*** *pitā* ***dadhyaṃ*** *dhiyamatnata* |

tasmin brahmāṇi purvathendra ukthā samaghmatārcann svarājyam||

Still as of old, whatever rite **Atharvan, Manus sire of all Dadhyach** performed, their prayer and praise united in that **Indra** meet, lauding his own imperial sway.

In the verse **Rv-1.84,13,** the Poet has stated that Rishi **Dadhyach** offered his bones/***Asthi*** (in reality, it means his body) to fashion **Vajra**/thunderbolt, the potent weapon for **Indra** to facilitate the killing of many **Vritras** (plural, means unlike **Indra**, **Vritra** is mortal).

Rv-1.84,13: With bones of **Dadhyac** for **his arms**, **Indra**, resistless in attack,
Struck **nine-and-ninety Vrtras dead**.

Additionally, Poet of the verse **Rv-4.16,20** has explained that the **Bhrugus** shaped **Ratha of Indra**.

Rv-4.16,20: Now, as the **Bhrgus wrought a car**, for **Indra** the Strong, the Mighty, we our prayer have fashioned.
That he may, never withdraw from us his friendship, but be our bodies' guard and strong defender.

The Poets of **Different Mandalas of Rigved** have also pointed out the fact that the **Bhrugus** were closely associated with the **Yajna**/ **Agni** worship and who also took personal interest in propagating the same from one home to another (see the verses Rv-1.58,5; Rv-2,4,2; Rv-3.2,4; Rv-3.5,10; Rv-4.7,1; Rv-4.7,4; Rv-8.43,13; Rv-10.46,2; Rv-10.46,9; Rv-10.92,10; Rv-10.122,5). Please note that most of these verses belong to the hymns addressed to **Agni**.

Special Note on the Historical References present in Rigved:

Many Vedic Scholars often state that the **Poets**/**Aryas** who composed **Rigved** did not keep record of their past. But the verse **Rv-1.139,9** makes it clear that the Poets of Old and Young Generations knew the real stories behind the origin of **Indra** and **Agni of Yajna**.

Rv-1.139,9: **Dadhyac of old**, **Anigiras**, **Priyamedha** these, and **Kanva**, **Atri**, **Manu knew my birth**, yea, **those of ancient days** and **Manu knew.**
Their long line stretcheth to the Gods, **our birth-connexions** are with them.
To these, for their high station, 1 bow down with song, to **Indra**, **Agni**, bow with song.

Additionally, existence of references of the mortal but pre-Rigvedic characters like **Ila**, **Pururavasa**, **Nahusha**, **Yayati**, and the story of together growing up of the first generation of the **Five Tribes** on the bank of river **Saraswati** exhibit that the ancestors of the Priests had close association with the ancient Royal Family who lived on the bank of river **Saraswati**.

Moreover, the **Last Mandala Poet** in the verses **Rv-10.75,5** and **6** (***Nadi-Stuti***) specifically highlighted important rivers of the **Eastern** and **Western parts of Rigvedic Territory** by properly grouping them together in the related verses. It shows that the Poet was aware of the complete geography of the Rigvedic country where his ancestors lived in the past.

Since the Poets of old generations **orally transferred** these key features to their next generations, and that is why, we find several references of the **pre-Rigvedic events** in the **Five Late Mandalas** that include tales of the Ribhus, Indra, Yajna, Noble Family, Five Tribes etc.

Unfortunately, most of the Vedic Scholars of the modern time either do not take these references seriously or intentionally misinterpret the same to mislead the readers.

II. Major Contributions made by the Ribhus during the evolution of Yajna:

As mentioned elsewhere**, Rigvedic Yajna** is a small scale duplication of the wildfire that occurs in nature. **Rigved** informs us that several ancient Rishis belonging to **Angirasa, Bhrugu** and other clans actively participated in the development of **Yajna** procedure. As per the information provided by various Composers, it is **Bharati** who first suggested to invite the Deities for **Yajna** by loudly singing prayer. Based on her advice, seniors decided to open the door for the composition of the prayers. As per the verse **Rv-1.96,2**; **Ayu** composed the **first Song of Praise**. Then some Rishis jointly framed the rules for the composition of Poems including **seven metres/chandaas (*sapta maryada kavaya.*** Also refer to hymn **Rv-10.130**).

Similarly, at the time of fashioning of **Yajna** ritual, the **Ribhus, (Vaja**, **Vibhvan**, and **Ribhu** are the three brothers) too made their contributions that is explained below.

- **Ribhus** made available more quantity of **Soma** juice for **sacrificial purpose.**
- **Ribhus *mentally fashioned* Ratha** for **Asvins** and **Hari**/two tawny steeds for **Indra** especially to bring them to the site of **Yajna** (see verses **Rv-1,20,2** and **3**). They also created more **Asvas from Asvas** for other Deities too (see verse **Rv-1.161,7**).
- **Ribhus** using their wisdom composed a special prayer for **Agni (Rv-10.80,7).**

Here the main question is, **what is the basis for the Ribhus produced more Soma juice?**

In **Rigved,** there are **11 hymns** dedicated to these three pre-Rigvedic Rishis who happened to be the sons of **Sudhanvan** and collectively known as the **Ribhus (**or **Vajas)**.

Following verse from **Mandala-4** describes that they used special technique for producing more quantity of **Soma juice** so that it can be offered in **Yajna**,

Rv-4.35,2 :Hither is come the **Rbhus' gift of riches**; here was the drinking of the **well-pressed Soma**,
Since by dexterity and **skill as craftsmen** ye made the **single chalice to be fourfold.**

As described in the above mentioned verse, the **Ribhus** using their skill could make **four cups** of juice from a **single cup**. When a large quantity of juice was made available, then the **Yajna addicted pre-Rigvedic Priests** could conduct more number of **Yajna** on the same day. Same juice was also consumed by the Priests after giving the libation.

References of the conversion a **single cup** into **fourfold** are also found in many verses of the hymns addressed to **Ribhus** such as **Rv-4.33,5**; **Rv-4.35,3; Rv-4.35,4; Rv-4.36,4; Rv-1.20,6; Rv-1.110,3; Rv-1.161,2; Rv-1.161,4.** Thus, the repeated references of **fourfold Soma Juice** make it apparent that by providing **ample quantity Soma Juice**, the **Ribhus** made invaluable contribution for **Yajna** ritual and hence it was highlighted by the different Poets.

III. The verses that could link the Ribhus with the Bhrugus:

In the earlier section, we have discussed about the pious and noble acts of the **Ribhus** in shaping the **Yajna rite** at the early stage.

In this section, we shall try to get answer to the fundamental question given below.

Whether the Ribhus (three brothers) who made available more quantity of the Soma Juice for Yajna Purpose were related to the Bhrugus?

It is to be noted here that in **Ten Mandalas of Rigved**, there is no direct reference indicating the **Ribhus** were from the ancient **Bhrugu** clan. It means to say that no Rigvedic Poet has ever said the **Ribhus** were directly related to the ancient Rishi **Bhrugu**.

Surprisingly, **Vamadeva Gotama**, the **Lead Composer of Mandala-4** who has devoted **five hymns** (**Rv-4.33** to **37**) to **Ribhus** and also spoke about the **Bhrugus shaped Ratha of Indra** (see **Rv-4.16,20**), did not relate the **Ribhus** with the **Bhrugus**. This may be due to the fact that **Vamadeva Gotama** belonged to **Angirasa family.**

Hence it becomes necessary to search for any clue provided by any Poet in the hymns of **Rigved**, on whose basis we can arrive at the probable answer. After scanning through several hymns of **Rigved**, it has been noticed that the two different Poets of **Mandala-9** and **10** have given some hints in their compositions. Selected verses from **Mandala-10** are given below.

Two verses from the hymn Rv-10.39 dedicated to Asvins

Rv-10.39,12: *ā tena yātaṃ manaso javīyasā* ***rathaṃ yaṃ vāṃ ṛbhavaścakruraśvinā*** |

yasya yoghe duhitā jāyate diva ubhe ahanīsudine vivasvataḥ ||

Come on that Chariot which the **Rbhus wrought for you**, the Chariot, **Asvins**, that is speedier than thought,
At harnessing whereof Heaven's Daughter springs to birth, and from Vivasvan come auspicious Night and Day.

Rv-10.39,14*:* *etaṃ vāṃ stoma**m******aśvināv****akarmātakṣāma* ***bhṛghavo na ratham*** |

nyamṛkṣāma yoṣaṇāṃ na marye nityaṃ na sūnuntanayaṃ dadhānāḥ ||

We have prepared this laud for you, **O Asvins**, and, like the **Bhrgus, as a car have framed it**,
Have decked it as a maid to meet the bridegroom, and brought it as a son, our stay for ever.

Aforementioned verses taken from the hymn of the **Last Mandala of Rigved** wherein the Poet has cryptically talked about making of **Ratha of Asvins**. In the verse **Rv-10.39,12**; the Poet has reiterated the pre-Rigvedic time story that, it is the **Ribhus** who framed **Ratha of Asvins** that runs faster than thought. But the same Composer in the verse **Rv-10.39,14**; has indirectly given an example of the **Bhrugus as Asvins' Ratha maker**.

From the above hint, it can be said that there is a strong possibility of the **Ribhus** related to **Bhrugus**. On the basis of **Asvins'Ratha maker** the Poet has attempted to connect both.

Now moving to another part of the earlier stated question, **how did the Ribhus make four cups of Soma juice out of a single cup?**

The verse from the hymn **Rv-9.11** addressed to **Soma Pavamana** offers probable answer to the said question.

Rv-9.11,2: *abhi te madhunā* ***payo'tharvāṇo*** *aśiśrayuḥ* | *devaṃ devāya devayu* ||

अभि ते मधुना पयो ऽथर्वाणो अशिश्रयुः | देवं देवाय देवयु ||

Together with thy pleasant juice the **Atharvans** have **commingled milk**,
Divine, devoted to the God.

In the above verse, the Singer has pointed out the fact that **Atharvans** (**plural**, ancient **Atharvan,** also known as the **father of Dadhyach who offered his bones for fabricating Vajra of God Indra,** is said to be from **Bhrugu** clan) have mixed the **sweet Soma juice** with the **milk** and then offered the God (**Soma**) to the Gods (**देवं देवाय देवयु** /Rigvedic Deities).

From the content of the above verse, it can be inferred that the ancient pious and skilful-handed **Ribhus** would have first extracted maximum juice from **Soma stalks** as they were the

well-known **Vaidyas/ Physicians** among the Rishis who then added ingredients like milk, honey and water to make the four cups from a single cup of **Soma** juice/concentrate.

When the **Mandala-9 Poet** specifically highlights **Atharvans** (***plural***) as the large quantity of **Soma Juice makers**, then it becomes evident that since pre-Rigvedic period, the **Bhrugus** had expertise in making **Soma Juice**. But as per the hymns dedicated to the **Ribhus**, it is the **three brothers** who made more **Soma juice** available for the **Yajna** purpose, then the possibility of close or blood relation between the **Ribhus** and the **Bhrugus** cannot be ruled out.

IV. **Reviewing the acts of the Bhrugus after inclusion of the Ribhus in the clan**:

Once the **Ribhus** are considered as the part of ancient **Bhrugu** clan, then it becomes essential to find out whether their inclusion in the old clan creates confusion about the activities that are credited to **pre-Rigvedic Bhrugus**. The information compiled from the Rigvedic hymns has been presented in **Table-1**.

Table-1

General perception about the acts credited to **Bhrugus**	Descriptions found in the Rigvedic verses/hymns about the **Bhrugus**
Bhrugus initiated the **Yajna** worship found in **Rigved**	The verse **Rv-1.60,1** brings out the fact that it is the ancient **Bhrugu** who got an idea of replication of wildfire into proper **Yajna** rite (up-gradation of simple **Agni** to **Yajna**). **Rv-10.80,7** informs us that the **Ribhus** composed prayer for **Agni of Yajna**.
Bhrugus introduced the **Soma sacrifice** first time in the Vedic Philosophy	As per the verses **Rv-4.33,5**; **Rv-4.35,2; Rv-4.35,3; Rv-4.35,4; Rv-4.36,4; Rv-1.20,6; Rv-1.110,3; Rv-1.161,2; Rv-1.161,4** it is the **Ribhus (Bhrugus)** due to their special skill made available more quantity of **Soma juice** and hence general perception about the **Bhrugus** as the originator of **Soma sacrifice** holds true.
Bhrugus shaped **Indra's Ratha**	In the hymns dedicated to the **Ribhus**, even though the Poets did not talk about the creator of **Ratha of Indra**, but the **Mandala-4** verse **Rv-4.16,20** indicates that **Bhrugus** mentally fashioned **Ratha of Indra**. Once the **Ribhus** are treated as the members of **Bhrugu** clan, then it makes no difference who is other person from **Bhrugu clan** mentally created **Ratha of Indra**. **Ribhus** are always known as the fashioner of **Indra's Asvas**/***Hari*** and **Asvins' Ratha.**

From the information placed in **Table-1**, it can be said that the incorporation of the **Ribhus** in the family of the ancient clan of Rishi **Bhrugu** does not go against either of them.

Special Observations on the "Asva/Ashva" of the Ribhus

1. As mentioned in the hymns dedicated to the **Ribhus**, three brothers namely; **Vaja**, **Ribhu** and **Vibhvana** mentally shaped the **Asvas** for the **Rigvedic Deities**. But as per the Poet of the hymns **Rv-1.162 and 163;** the **True Horse** is the creation of **God Tvastar** (see verses **Rv-1.62, 3; and Rv-1.162,19**). As a matter of fact, the **Rigvedic Poets** have treated the stories of origin of the **Fictional Asvas of the Deities** and the **Factual Horse** mentioned in the hymns **Rv-1.162 and 163** in a different manner and hence both cannot be correlated.

2. Since inception of **Rigved**, the Composers have treated ***Dhenu***/ the **milch cow** as the Very Respected Character or as good as the **Deity**, but the Poet of last but one Mandala in the hymns **Rv-1.162 and 163** has given the **True Horse** the **status of the God** (refer to verse **Rv-1.162,1** for the special term ***deva-jatasya***) which manifests that the **True Horse** entered the Rigvedic Territory during the period of the **Late Mandalas.** Despite the fact that the several **Rigvedic Poets** have regularly glorified the acts of **Indra's Two Tawny Steeds /*Hari*** in many verses, but the hymn dedicated to ***Hari*** is found only in the **Last Mandala** (**Rv-10.96**). It means to say that earlier to the composition of hymns **Rv-1.162 and 163** that are addressed to the **True Horse**, no hymn was independently devoted to **Indra's *Hari/Asvas*** though they were shaped much earlier, during the **pre-Rigvedic period itself**.

V. References:

1. "Rig Veda" (Bilingual), Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896) in PDF

2. Rig Veda (Griffith Translation)-Table of Content, Alphabetical frequency etc. from the Intratext Digital Library available on www.Intratext .com

"Some Vedic Experts do not show genuine interest in knowing the Facts about the various characters depicted in Rigved. Instead, they deliberately look for the Faults/Shortcomings in the Rigvedic texts with the wicked and mischievous motives. Their commentaries/views on Rigved definitely reflect their Malicious Intentions".